

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium

March 25, 2022

President Biden. Good morning. Today I'm proud to once again be standing together with President von der Leyen as we announce a new groundbreaking initiative between the European Union and the United States.

First, we're coming together to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian energy. Putin has issued Russia's energy resources to coerce and manipulate its neighbors. That's how he's used it. He's used the profits to drive his war machine. And that's why, earlier this month, I announced the United States would ban all imports of Russian energy to make it clear that the American people would not be part of subsidizing Putin's brutal, unjustified war against the people of Ukraine.

At the time, I noted that we were able to take those steps when others could not because the United States is a net exporter of energy, with a strong domestic industry. And the United States welcomed the European Union's powerful statement earlier this month committing to rapidly reduce its dependence on Russian gas. Today we've agreed on a joint game plan toward that goal while accelerating our progress toward a secure clean energy future.

This initiative focuses on two core issues: One, helping Europe reduce its dependency on Russian gas as quickly as possible. And secondly, reducing Europe's demand for gas overall. To address the first point, the United States, together with our international partners, they're going to—we're going to work to ensure an additional 15—one-five—15 billion cubic meters of liquified natural gas—LNG—for Europe this year.

And as the EU works to discontinue buying Russian gas well before 2030, it will also—we'll work to ensure additional EU market demand for 50 billion cubic meters of LNG from the United States annually by 2030.

To accomplish this, the European Commission is going to work with the member states to store gas across the Continent, to build more infrastructure to receive LNG, and to take steps to increase the efficiency of gas. This build-out—this build-out—will occur in a way that consists—is consistent with, not in conflict with, the zero—net-zero climate goal we—that we're shooting for.

It's going to take some time to adjust gas supply chains and infrastructure as is built the last decade—for the last decade. So we're going to have to make sure the families in Europe can get through this winter and the next while we're building an infrastructure for a diversified, resilient, and clean energy future.

At the same time, this crisis also presents an opportunity. It's a catalyst, a catalyst that will drive the investments we need to double down on our clean energy goals and accelerate progress toward our net-zero emissions future. That's what the second part of this initiative is all about.

The United States and the European Union are going to work together to take concrete measures to reduce dependence on natural gas—period—and to maximize the available—the availability and use of renewable energy. We're going to accelerate widespread adoption of energy-efficient technologies and equipment, like smart thermostats, the work—that work to—and work to electrify heating systems all across Europe. We're going to invest in innovative solutions and technologies to make the switch from fossil fuels. And together, we'll advance the use of clean and renewable hydrogen to reduce our carbon emissions.

This—these steps will increase energy security, economic security, and national security. And we're going to stand up a joint task force to implement these changes and drive progress that will be cochaired by representatives from the White House and the President of the European Union's team—Commission's team.

Madam President, I know—I know—that eliminating Russian gas will have costs for Europe. But it's not only the right thing to do from a moral standpoint, it's going to put us on a much stronger strategic footing.

And I'm proud to announce that we've also reached another major breakthrough in transatlantic data flows. Privacy and security are key elements of my digital agenda. And today we've agreed to unprecedented protections for data privacy and security for our citizens. This new arrangement will enhance the Privacy Shield Framework; promote growth and innovation in Europe and the United States; and help companies, both small and large, compete in the digital economy.

Just as we did when we resolved the Boeing-Airbus dispute and lifted the steel and aluminum tariffs, the United States and the EU are finding creative, new approaches to knit our economies and our people closer together, grounded on shared values. This framework underscores our shared commitment to privacy, to data protection, and to the rule of law. And it's going to allow the European Commission to once again authorize transatlantic data flows that help facilitate \$7.1 trillion in economic relationships with the EU.

So thank you again, Madam President, for your personal friendship, for your partnership, and above all, your leadership. All of this is bringing the European Union and the United States even closer together, and that's a win for all of us. So I thank you all, and I'm now going to yield the podium to the President. Let me pull this out.

[At this point, a step stool was pulled out behind the podium.]

I've got to earn my salary here. *[Laughter]*

[A staffer assisted the President and adjusted the step stool further.]

Is it out enough? There you go. Thank you. *[Laughter]*

President von der Leyen. Thank you. Mr. President, dear Joe, your presence here in Brussels this week—at the NATO summit, at the G-7, and at our European Council—sends a very powerful message to the world. The transatlantic partnership stands stronger and more united than ever. And we are determined to stand up against Russia's brutal war.

This war will be a strategic failure for Putin. Our cooperation on the four successive waves of sanctions against Russia has been extraordinary and exceptional. The sanctions are now working their way deep into the Russian system, draining Putin's resources to finance this atrocious war.

Our work on sanctions also shows that when we act together, we're stronger, and we really can make a difference. And we are continuing to reinforce our cooperation in many strategic ways: on humanitarian and security assistance to Ukraine, on energy, on fighting the threats against our democracies, on solving outstanding issues in the EU-U.S. cooperation, including in data protection and privacy.

In a world faced with disorder, our transatlantic unity upholds fundamental values and rules that our citizens believe in. Let me focus first on refugees. Until now, around 3½ million people have left Ukraine, half of them children. Every second refugee is a child. And the numbers will keep rising. So, together, we are mobilizing massive resources to support those displaced by the conflict, be it in Ukraine or in the neighboring countries.

Just this week, for example, I announced that the European Union will allocate an extra €3.4 billion for this purpose, and more will come. This demonstrates our deep support for Ukraine and its citizens.

And I want to tell the American people how grateful Europe is for their unwavering support. This support also extends to strengthening Europe's energy security and independence from Russian fossil fuels. As you know, we aim to reduce this dependency on Russian fossil fuels and to get rid of it. And this can only be achieved through, of course, first of all, investment in renewables, but also through additional gas supplies, including LNG deliveries.

So we want, as Europeans, to diversify away from Russia, towards suppliers that we trust, that are friends, and that are reliable. And therefore, the U.S. commitment to provide the European Union with additional at least 15 billion cubic meters of LNG this year is a big step in this direction because this will replace the LNG supply we currently receive from Russia.

And looking ahead, the United States and Europe will ensure stable demand and supply for additional at least 50 billion cubic meter of U.S. LNG until 2030. And if we look at that, this amount, 50 bcm per year, is replacing one-third already of the Russian gas going to Europe today. So we are right in—on track now to diversify away from Russian gas and towards our friends' and partners' reliable and trustworthy suppliers.

We need to secure our supplies not just for next winter, but also for the years ahead. And this is an important, a big starting point to do that.

Our partnership aims to sustain us through this war, to work on our independence from Russian fossil fuels, but it also focuses on building a greener future with climate neutrality. We will work together also with our energy-intensive industry. And the good news is that the infrastructure that we use for gas today can be used for clean hydrogen in the future. So this investment we are doing right now is also an investment in the decarbonizing of our economy.

The cooperation shows the power of our democracies. I particularly welcome that we will step up our respective action on strengthening democracies, the rule of law, the freedom of media in the world. And we also need to continue adapting our own democracies to a changing world.

This is particularly true when it comes to digitalization, in which the protection of personal data and privacy has become so crucial. And therefore, I'm very pleased that we have found an agreement in principle on a new framework for transatlantic data flows. This will enable predictable and trustworthy data flows between the EU and U.S., safeguarding privacy and civil liberties.

And I really want to thank Commissioner Reynders and Secretary Raimondo for their tireless efforts over the past month to finish a balanced and effective solution. This is another step in our—strengthening our partnership. We managed to balance security and the right to privacy and data protection.

Mr. President, dear Joe: Putin is trying to turn back the clock to another era, an era of brutal use of force, of power politics, of spheres of influence, and internal repression. I am confident he will fail. We are working together to forge a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future. And I know we will succeed. Thank you very much.

President Biden. Thank you.

President von der Leyen. Thank you very much.

President Biden. Thank you, everyone.

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the Rue Ducale Room at the U.S. Chief of Mission Residence. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. President von der Leyen referred to Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders of the European Commission; and U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : European Commission, President von der Leyen.

Locations: Brussels, Belgium.

Names: Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; von der Leyen, Ursula.

Subjects: Belgium : President Biden's visit; Business and industry : Domestic steel and aluminum production, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Global competitiveness; Communications : Broadband and wireless technologies; Energy : Hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles :: Promotion efforts; Environment : Carbon emissions; Europe : European Union :: Energy cooperation with U.S.; Europe : European Union :: European Commission President; Europe : European Union :: Trade with U.S.; Russia : International and U.S. sanctions; Russia : Oil supply and refining; Russia : President; Russia : Ukraine, airstrikes and invasion; Ukraine : Russian airstrikes and invasion.

DCPD Number: DCPD202200202.